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Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Summary record of the 1st meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 24 February 2011, at 10 a.m.

Temporary Chair: Mr. Ban Ki-moon ..... (Secretary-General of the United Nations)
Temporary Chair: Mr. Shaaban ..... (Under-Secretary-General)
Chair: Mr. Carrión-Mena ..... (Ecuador)

Contents

Opening of the session by the Secretary-General

Adoption of the agenda

Election of officers

Organization of work

Other matters

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The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

Opening of the session by the Secretary-General

1. **The Temporary Chair** said that he was pleased to join the Special Committee as it began its work for 2011, the first year of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. Attention should be focused on accomplishing concrete results with the involvement of all concerned: the Special Committee, the administering Powers and the Non-Self-Governing Territories. December 2010 had seen the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the adoption by the General Assembly of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. On that occasion, he had appealed to the international community to realize the full spirit of the Declaration, which called for the immediate and complete elimination of the colonial system in all its forms and manifestations, in keeping with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The Special Committee had a crucial role to play, as the only intergovernmental body exclusively devoted to advancing the decolonization agenda of the United Nations.

2. Sixteen Non-Self-Governing Territories remained on the list, awaiting constructive, results-oriented initiatives. On a case-by-case basis, those Territories should be given the opportunity to exercise their right to self-determination, in order to take full account of the interests of their peoples. Colonial situations were completely outdated and must be addressed with renewed vigour and creativity.

3. In his report to the General Assembly on the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism (A/65/330), he had recalled that the Assembly had requested the Special Committee to continue to seek suitable means for the immediate and full implementation of the Declaration. The Committee should therefore assess its past work and achievements in order to chart a way forward, together with the administering Powers, for the ultimate benefit of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. The Special Committee's work on devising a plan of action for the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism and the forthcoming Caribbean regional seminar on decolonization might prove instrumental in that regard.

4. He hoped that difficulties encountered in the recent past could gradually be overcome, thereby strengthening the Committee's determination to develop effective formal and informal modalities to help it accomplish its mandate. The completion of the decolonization process would require the concerted efforts of all concerned. Dialogue to improve cooperation between the Special Committee and the administering Powers therefore continued to be of the utmost importance.

5. The Secretariat would spare no effort to assist the Committee in its work, but that was no substitute for the choices, decisions and actions expected of the Special Committee.

6. *Mr. Shaaban (Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management) took the Chair.*

Adoption of the agenda

7. *The agenda was adopted.*

Election of officers

8. **The Temporary Chair** drew the Committee's attention to a letter from the Permanent Representative of Ecuador, dated 21 February 2011, and a letter from the Permanent Representative of Saint Lucia, dated 23 February 2011, expressing their interest in chairing the Committee.

9. **Mr. Aisi** (Papua New Guinea), also speaking on behalf of Fiji, said that the Committee was confronted with a unique situation for the first time in its history. The usual arrangement was that the Chair would be held by the Caribbean and Pacific regions, under the principle of rotation. That principle, however, should allow for flexibility, as recently demonstrated when Indonesia had held the Chair. Also, considering that many of the countries that had been decolonized through the Committee's work were in Africa, it was his view that an African nation should soon have the opportunity to take the Chair.

10. Having to choose between two candidates was good, but unfortunately there could only be one person in the Chair. While the Committee was entitled to make its own procedural rules, he urged all members to endeavour to find a consensus. In a spirit of goodwill, he proposed that the representative of Saint Lucia should stay in the post for the coming year, and the

Committee should agree in writing that the representative of Ecuador would automatically assume the Chair the following year. In consideration of the principle of rotation, the Pacific members were willing to forgo their "turn" in order to accommodate the proposal.

11. **Mr. Kleib** (Indonesia) said that any country had the right to put forward their candidacy to chair the Committee and all interest was welcome. However, it was unfortunate that there were currently two excellent candidates for only one post. He was reluctant to vote on the matter, and therefore endorsed the proposal made by the representative of Papua New Guinea.

12. **The Temporary Chair** suggested that the Committee should indicate its support for the proposal made by the representative of Papua New Guinea by a show of hands.

13. **Mr. Ja'afari** (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking on a point of order, requested a short suspension of the meeting for informal consultations before a vote was taken.

14. **Mr.** Hardeep Singh **Puri** (India) seconded Mr. Ja'afari's request.

15. **Mr. Núñez Mosquera** (Cuba) said that it would be preferable to adopt the proposal under consideration by consensus, without any voting.

16. **Mr. Carrión-Mena** (Ecuador) said that since there were two candidates for election, a vote should be held.

The meeting was suspended at 10.50 a.m. and resumed at 11 a.m.

17. **Mr. Aisi** (Papua New Guinea) withdrew his earlier proposal.

18. **The Temporary Chair** invited the Committee to elect its Chair by secret ballot.

19. *At the invitation of the President, Ms. Tambunam (Indonesia) and Mr. Sitnikov (Russian Federation) acted as tellers.*

20. *A vote was taken by secret ballot.*

Number of ballot papers:	25
Number of valid ballots:	25
Number of members voting:	25
Required majority:	13

Number of votes obtained:

Mr. Carrión-Mena (Ecuador):	15
Mr. St. Aimee (Saint Lucia):	10

21. *Having obtained the required majority, Mr. Carrión-Mena (Ecuador) was elected Chair of the Special Committee.*

22. *Mr. Núñez Mosquera (Cuba) and Mr. Davies (Sierra Leone) were elected Vice-Chairs, and Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) was elected Rapporteur, by acclamation.*

23. *Mr. Carrión-Mena (Ecuador) took the Chair.*

24. **Mr. St. Aimee** (Saint Lucia) expressed his congratulations to Mr. Carrión-Mena on his election. He would continue to work closely with the Special Committee and support its new Chair.

25. **The Chair** said that the delegations of Argentina, Spain and Tajikistan had indicated their wish to participate in the opening meeting of the Special Committee as observers.

26. Ecuador was committed to the principles of self-determination and independence, which were enshrined in its Constitution. The guiding principles of its foreign policy were the independence and legal equality of States, peaceful coexistence, self-determination, cooperation, integrity and solidarity.

27. Mindful of the recent 50th anniversary of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, closer consultation was needed between the administering Powers, the Special Committee and the Non-Self-Governing Territories, in accordance with the provisions of the relevant United Nations resolutions. The challenge ahead would be difficult, but not impossible. The Committee should draw strength from the fact that, over the past 50 years, resolution 1514 (XV) had added 93 countries to the membership of the United Nations, and had increased the number of African nations from only 4 to more than 50.

28. His country was honoured to assume responsibility for guiding the Committee's work at the start of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. He would continue the work of his predecessors and develop new strategies leading towards the decolonization of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories in the near future.

29. He urged all States members of the Special Committee to participate fully, with a renewed spirit of multilateralism, in order to achieve the goal of decolonization for the fewer than 2 million people still living in colonial situations. That figure however paled in comparison to the 750 million who had been living in such circumstances in 1945, which demonstrated the positive role of the Declaration and of the United Nations itself.

30. The fact that a vote for the position of Chair had been necessary should be interpreted as a positive sign of the Committee's vitality and desire for greater visibility. The proposals presented in connection with that vote demonstrated that dynamism and boosted his and the newly elected Bureau's commitment to their work during the year ahead.

31. **Mr. Núñez Mosquera** (Cuba) said that he viewed Cuba's election to the post of Vice-Chair of the Special Committee as recognition of the dedication of the Cuban people to the eradication of colonialism. The Committee was the only intergovernmental body exclusively devoted to advancing the United Nations decolonization agenda. There were 16 Non-Self-Governing Territories remaining on its list, plus the special case of the colonial situation in Puerto Rico. The worsening socio-economic situation there and the oppression of its students and members of the bar should not be ignored. He was proud to note the presence of administering Powers at the meeting. With their cooperation, the Special Committee should be able to resolve the situation in the Non-Self-Governing Territories and Puerto Rico in the coming decade.

32. **Mr. Aisi** (Papua New Guinea) said that his delegation pledged its full support to the work of the Special Committee. The Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism was under way and there were 16 Non-Self-Governing Territories remaining. While the work of the Special Committee was not always acknowledged, it had resulted in the creation of many nations and this was a source of pride to its members. Noting that the administering Powers could be more proactive, he looked forward to the Chair's leadership in bridging the gap between the Territories and the administering Powers.

Organization of work (A/AC.109/2011/L.1 and L.2)

33. **The Chair** drew attention to a note by the Secretary-General, contained in document A/AC.109/2011/L.1, indicating the resolutions and decisions relevant to the work of the Special Committee for the current year. The Committee also had before it document A/AC.109/2011/L.2, which contained suggestions from the Chair concerning the Special Committee's organization of work, programme of work and timetable.

34. **Ms. Shestakova** (Secretary of the Committee) said that the question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) would be taken up on 21 June 2011.

35. **The Chair** said that it was expected that the work of the Special Committee would conclude well before the end of June 2011 so that all of its reports would be available to the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session.

36. He took it that the Special Committee wished to approve the proposed organization of work for the current year with the understanding that the meeting schedule might be subsequently revised as and when required.

37. *It was so decided.*

38. **Mr. Balé** (Congo) reiterated his delegation's support for the Chair and the Bureau and expressed his appreciation for the work of the outgoing Chair.

39. **Mr. Ja'afari** (Syrian Arab Republic) congratulated the Chair and Vice-Chairs on their election, and paid tribute to the representative of St. Lucia for breathing new life into the work of the Committee while serving as the Committee's Chair. In an endorsement of the statement made by the representative of Papua New Guinea, he reiterated his delegation's commitment to the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. It was shameful that 65 years after the creation of the United Nations there were still people in the world awaiting liberation and decolonization. He appealed to the Committee to close that dark page in the history of humanity.

Other matters

40. **The Chair** said that in accordance with the decision of the General Assembly, the meetings of the Special Committee would be convened without the presence of the quorum required under rules 67 and 108 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. That would enable the Special Committee to declare its meetings open and to proceed with its work without the

required quorum. However, the presence of a majority of the members would be required for any decision to be taken.

41. Informal consultations would be held to consider the issues related to the organization of the next regional seminar of the Special Committee. He expressed the intention to hold the seminar in mid-May 2011, in the Caribbean region.

The meeting rose at 12 p.m.